

# NOURISHING NEWS

IDAHO STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS

VOLUME 2, Issue 4

NOVEMBER 2007

This publication has been sent to all:

- ☐ School Food Service Directors
- ☐ School Food Service Kitchen Managers
- ☐ CACFP Directors/ Owners and Program Managers



HEALTHY MEALS FOR EVERY CHILD, EVERY DAY!

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## A Message from the Director

Serving children with special needs diets presents school food service staff with new challenges, as well as rewards. This newsletter provides guidance on how to handle situations that may arise and offers advice about such issues as funding and liability. This guidance is based on the policy guidelines outlined in the FNS Instruction 783-2, Revision 2, Meal Substitutions for Medical or Other Special Dietary Reasons from USDA.

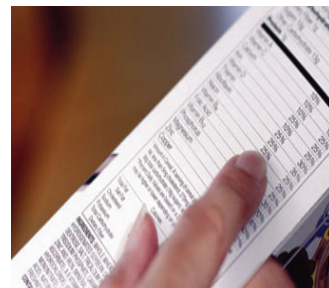
The USDA requires all Child Nutrition Programs to make the necessary dietary accommodations for students with special dietary needs that have been determined by the student's physician. A Medical

Statement Form signed by the student's physician must be on file for the Child Nutrition Program to make changes to the menu for the student. This is a government requirement. Medical Statement Forms are available either at your local USDA Child Nutrition Program or can be found in the lower left hand corner of the Idaho State Department of Education Child Nutrition Web site at: <http://www.sde.idaho.gov/child/>. All information concerning any student with a special needs diet is confidential.

Please take the time to carefully read this important newsletter on the requirements and guidelines

for working with children who have a special dietary need. Your success and understanding of this important topic results in a win-win for everyone involved.

Sincerely,  
Colleen Fillmore, PhD, RD, LD  
Director, Child Nutrition Programs



## Upcoming Events



**November 6 & 7  
Boise, ID**

Healthy Edge Trainer Certification

This workshop is for qualified instructors to become certified Healthy Edge trainers. For formation on the application process and registration, please contact Jean Zaske at [jmzaske@sde.idaho.gov](mailto:jmzaske@sde.idaho.gov) or

208-332-6828.



## Your Questions Answered

### Q. What is a Food Allergy?

A. A food allergy is an immune system response. It occurs when the body mistakes an ingredient in food -- usually a protein -- as harmful and creates a defense system (antibodies) to fight it. Allergy symptoms develop when the antibodies are battling the "invading" food. The most common food allergies are peanuts, tree nuts (such as walnuts, pecans and almonds), fish and shellfish, milk, eggs, soy products and wheat.

### Q. What is Food Intolerance?

A. Food intolerance is a digestive system response rather than an immune system response. It occurs when something in a food irritates a person's digestive system or when a person is unable to properly digest or breakdown the food. Intolerance to lactose, which is found in milk and other dairy products, is the most common food intolerance.

(definitions from Web MD)



## CIRCULATE TO:

- ☐ Superintendent
 ☐ Principal
 ☐ School Nurse  
☐ Health Teacher
 ☐ Kitchen Staff



*According to the Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Network, scientists estimate that approximately 12 MILLION Americans suffer from a true food allergy. Three million of those are children.*

*There are eight foods that account for 90% of all food-related allergic reactions:*

- Milk
- Eggs
- Peanuts
- Tree nuts
- Fish
- Shellfish
- Soy
- Wheat

*<http://www.foodallergy.org/questions.html>*



## Physician's Statement for Children with Disabilities

Heidi Martin, RD, LD  
Coordinator

USDA regulations 7 CFR Part 15b require substitutions or modifications in school meals for children whose disabilities restrict their diets. A **child with a disability** must be provided substitutions in foods when that need is supported by a statement signed by a licensed physician. The physician's statement **must** identify:

- the child's disability;
- an explanation of why the disability restricts the child's diet;
- the major life activity affected by the disability;
- the food or foods to be omitted from the child's diet, and the food or choice of foods that must be substituted.

### Medical Statement for Children with Special Dietary Needs

The school food service may make food substitutions, at their discretion,

for individual children who do not have a disability, but who are medically certified as having a special medical or dietary need.

Such determinations are only made on a case-by-case basis. This provision covers those children who have food intolerances or allergies but do not have life-threatening reactions (anaphylactic reactions when exposed to the foods) to which they have problems.

Each special dietary request must be supported by a statement which explains the food substitution that is requested. It must be signed by a recognized medical authority (physician, physician's assistant, nurse practitioner, registered dietitian or a nurse).

The medical statement **must** include:

- an identification of the medical or other special dietary condition which restricts the child's diet;
- the food or foods to be omitted from the child's diet;
- and the food or choice of foods to be substituted.

Sample medical statement forms can be found on the Idaho CNP Web site: [www.sde.idaho.gov/child](http://www.sde.idaho.gov/child).



Source: USDA, FNS, Accommodating Children with Special Dietary Needs in the School Nutrition Programs Guidance for School Food Service Staff

## Peanut Allergy Protocol for Schools

Anna Mae Florence, RD, LD  
Coordinator

What should a school district do when they have a student with a severe peanut allergy? After a doctor has provided a signed medical statement, the district has some obligations.

The responsibility rests upon the school to provide a safe, non-allergic meal to the child. Organizing a meeting with all those concerned is a place to start. Attendees should include the student, parents or guardian, school nurse, teacher, administrator, food service director, kitchen manager and any others involved. Decisions need to be made regarding how the school will handle emergencies. Go over what the signs of anaphylaxis are, where the epinephrine needle is kept (the

EpiPen®) and who should administer it.

The kitchen is responsible for making sure that all ingredients are safe. **ALL** labels need to be read. Most labels will provide enough information to make an informed decision, but some labels may require obtaining additional information from the manufacturer or supplier.

Sometimes an allergy is so severe that the sufferer may react to touch or airborne particles. Kitchens may need to designate an allergy-free zone. This area is kept free of all potentially harmful foods and ingredients. Handling foods safely is necessary. Special precautions

should be made to prevent any kind of cross contamination. All bowls, pots and utensils should be washed correctly and bleach should be used to rid the area of any possible contaminants.

Peanut Free Zone



Because a peanut allergy is life-threatening, school food service must be prepared to provide as safe an environment as possible. When you meet together as a team, determine all the risks and how to handle them so you can feel confident you are doing what you can to keep the students with food allergies safe.



## Be a Part of Planning Meetings

Anna Mae Florence, RD,LD  
Coordinator

Due to many reasons, school districts are seeing more students with special dietary needs. It may be an allergy, a metabolic disease or food intolerance. The nutrition department should begin by obtaining a medical statement from the physician or medical authority.

If a disability is diagnosed, the school will document a program or plan. Sometimes these planning meetings are called an **IEP, Individual Education Program**, if the student needs *special education* and related services. Another type of meeting is a **Section 504 Plan** which may be written for a child who is *not enrolled in special education classes* but needs special health-related accommodations due

to a disability. If these documents include any special dietary needs, a representative from food service should attend the meeting to ensure that the kitchen is aware of the disability and has the capabilities to accommodate the child correctly. For example, if an IEP says that the kitchen will serve breakfast to a child, even if there is no breakfast program, they must. If something is in the IEP, it must be done. Special labor costs may be covered through special education funds, if the child has an IEP.

Another place where information about special dietary needs may be found is an individual health care plan (IHP) developed by the school nurse. As the food service director

or manager, you need to be aware of these plans/documents so that you can provide the best service possible for these special children in our schools. When the school food service and other school employees work together, appropriate and reasonable accommodations will be developed resulting in success.



## Diabetic Diets

Anna Mae Florence, RD,LD  
Coordinator



Young people are being diagnosed with diabetes at a higher rate than ever before. Type 2 diabetes is often a consequence of being obese or overweight. This type of diabetes affects the body's ability to use the insulin that it produces. Sometimes an oral medication is needed to assist the body in producing more insulin, or more effective insulin.

Another type of diabetes is Type 1 diabetes. The person afflicted cannot produce any insulin and needs to administer a shot of insulin. The symptoms of someone with diabetes are:

- Increased thirst and urination

- Blurred vision
- Weight loss
- Fatigue
- Constant hunger

It is important to manage diabetes because there are many harmful health problems that can occur if good control is not established. Some of these include: blindness, kidney disease, amputations, heart disease and stroke. Good control is defined as keeping the blood glucose levels in a desirable range. Put simply, food increases blood glucose and exercise reduces it. Many other factors, such as stress, illness and growth, can also influence glucose.

Students with diabetes need to check their blood sugar often. Most diabetic students are able to handle this responsibility; however, there are those who cannot. The school

nurse would be the most logical person to assist the diabetic student, but there are districts that do not have a full-time nurse. In these cases, to provide optimum care, those school staff personnel who have responsibility for students with diabetes need to be trained. Training should consist of recognizing emergencies and knowing who to contact.

There is an important manual available on the State Department of Education's Child Nutrition Program Web site titled: "Helping the Student with Diabetes Succeed a Guide for School Personnel". Please look to this manual for guidance on dealing with these special students.

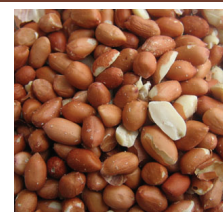


## Symptoms of Food Allergies

- Rash or hives
- Nausea
- Stomach pain
- Diarrhea
- Itchy skin
- Shortness of breath
- Chest pain
- Swelling of the airways to the lungs
- Anaphylaxis

## Symptoms of Food Intolerance

- Nausea
- Stomach pain (gas, cramps or bloating)
- Vomiting
- Heartburn
- Diarrhea
- Headaches
- Irritability or nervousness



## Suggestions for Foodservice Personnel

- Be included in meetings with the student who has food allergies, the student's parents, school nurse, teachers, principals, counselors and health care provider. Be able to recognize the student and become familiar with his or her emergency medical information and specific food allergy.
- Ask parents to provide you with a copy of the signed medical statement from the physician outlining appropriate ingredient substitutions.
- Know where emergency medications such as epinephrine (EpiPen®) are stored and how they should be administered in case a student has an allergic reaction in the school cafeteria.
- Keep food allergy information in a handy place in case there are questions about any special diet.
- Learn how to read labels and review menus with parents of students who have food allergies to determine what, if any, menu items need to be substituted.
- Avoid cross-contact of foods (which occurs when two foods come into contact with each other, causing their proteins to mix). Use separate utensils for jams, jellies and peanut butter and wash them thoroughly with warm, soapy water.
- Work with a registered dietitian or other qualified nutrition specialist to manage dietary substitutions.
- All recommended accommodations or changes to existing diet orders should be documented in writing (possibly in the production record) to protect the school and to avoid misunderstandings.

Source: <http://www.foodallergy.org/>



### State Department of Education

Tom Luna  
Superintendent of Public Instruction  
650 W. State St.  
P.O. Box 83720  
Boise, ID 83720-0027  
208-332-6800  
Toll Free: 800-432-4601

#### For more information contact:

Anna Mae Florence RD LD at 208-332-6829  
-or-

Heidi Martin RD LD at 208-332-6827

or visit [www.sde.idaho.gov/child/](http://www.sde.idaho.gov/child/)

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Idaho State Department of Education  
Child Nutrition Programs  
P.O. Box 83720  
Boise, Idaho 83720-0027